

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) applauded U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke's announcement today that \$167 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act would benefit 50 habitat restoration projects including Piscataway Park in Accokeek, Maryland. The projects seek to restore damaged wetlands, shellfish beds, coral reefs and reopen fish passages to boost the health of our nation's coastal and Great Lakes communities.

Secretary Locke announced that Piscataway Park will receive \$1 million to restore 2 acres of shoreline along the Potomac River. This project will provide fish habitat and erosion protection. Additionally, it seeks to protect 30 acres of freshwater wetland and a threatened Native American archeological site.

"I am pleased that the Piscataway Park project was chosen as a priority restoration project. The Park is a national treasure on the Potomac River that is home to many species and serves as a wonderful resource for environmental research and education, and I am pleased that it will receive needed funding to ensure its preservation. I want to commend the Alice Ferguson Foundation for their leadership on this important issue," **stated Rep. Hoyer.**

Tracy Bowen, Executive Director of the Alice Ferguson Foundation stated, "The funding for this project comes at a critical time when our shoreline is significantly threatened. We look forward to implementing this innovative project that will protect our shoreline from erosion concerns and related habitat issues."

Healthy coastal habitats are critical to the recovery and sustainability of the U.S. economy as coastal areas generate more than 28 million jobs in the United States. Additionally, commercial and recreational fishing employs 1.5 million people and contributes \$111 billion to the nation's economy. The projects funded in this announcement will employ Americans with a wide range of skills including laborers, nursery workers, design engineers, restoration ecologists, landscape architects, hydrologists and specialized botanists.

"These Recovery Act projects will put Americans to work while restoring our coasts and combating climate change," **Secretary Locke said.** "They reflect our investment in sound science and commitment to help strengthen local economies."

"I am pleased by Secretary Locke's announcement. It is critical both to our environment and our economy that we utilize Recovery funds to invest in projects that will improve our local

habitats while putting Americans back to work," **stated Rep. Hoyer.**

Upon completion, these projects will have restored more than 8,900 acres of habitat. These restoration projects will remove more than 850 metric tons of debris, rebuild oyster and other shellfish habitat and reduce threats to 11,750 acres of coral reefs.

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